

TABLE VIII. PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS TO BE PAID BY NGONI NATIVE
TREASURY, 1949

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Description of post	Number of posts	Mean annual salary in £s, to nearest £
Chief	10	72
Councillor	4	60
Treasury clerk	2½(a)	57
Artisan	2	42
Court clerk	10	25
Messenger	22	25
Assessor	20	24
School attendance officer	5	24
Road foreman	2	24
Office boy	1	24
Mail runner	2	16
Nursery keeper (fruit trees)	1	15
School matron	6	9(b)
Total number of full-time posts	87½	

(a) One tax-collecting clerk whose work was in Fort Jameson Township was paid jointly by the Ngoni and Cewa Native Treasuries.

(b) Including £1½ contributed by missions.

This table is based on the approved estimates for 1949 and it is possible that not all the posts were filled. In previous years all posts had been filled without difficulty, except for the matrons.

The emoluments shown here do not include allowances paid for bicycles, lorry fares, and rent-free housing available for some employees.

Not included in the table are the sums paid to a few employees at the Demonstration Farm, and the provision made for 240 man-months of casual labour on the roads at 25s. a month and 360 man-days of carrier labour at 10d. a day.

NGONILAND AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN IT

as young men, and had known the independence and supremacy of the Ngoni kingdoms. The expression 'every-thing is finished now' was often on their lips, especially when faced by new demands from the government, or by rebellious attitudes from their former subject peoples. 178 184 561

'The middle generation' was the term applied to the men who had as children known the Ngoni kingdoms in their prime. Though they had never fought as warriors nor been enrolled in an age-regiment, some of them had gone to the wars as young boys, carrying the gear for their older brothers. Many of these men, especially in the North, came under the influence of the missions, and became teachers, clerks, ministers and hospital assistants, married Christian wives and brought up their children in Christian, but Ngoni Christian, families. These men never lost their attachment to the Ngoni way of living, and many of them had made a successful synthesis of the old and the new ways. They stood, as they said, 'between' the generations, for they knew and understood both sides of an immensely different way of living and standard of values. Their children were 'the generation of today', who had no personal experience of past Ngoni ascendancy, and who took mission schooling and working for wages as a normal feature of their life. [797] [463] [183] [156]

When I lived in Ngoni villages, such as those described briefly in this chapter, Ngoni values and attitudes dominated social relationships. There was a determined struggle on the part of all responsible for child training to inculcate these Ngoni ideas and ways of living. The senior men and women were aware of the constant and increasing infiltration into their way of living of ideas, attitudes and behaviour coming from other ethnic groups in their midst. In addition their culture was being undermined by European influences in the schools, in the money economy, and from modern political developments, emphasizing an all-Nyasaland sentiment rather than loyalties based on ethnic grouping. Ngoni pride of race, and a consciousness that they had a [178] [829] [177] [861] [186]

VILLAGE LIFE FOR OLDER BROTHERS AND SISTERS

521 men's affairs. The kind of topics discussed by men at the kraal
 867 gate included hunting, in the right season; cases heard in the
 courts and the application of Ngoni law to all subjects of the
 Ngoni chiefs; the organization of village affairs from tax col-
 lecting and dealing with tax evaders to beer drinks and
 burials and building houses; the sales of cotton, tobacco and
 cattle at near-by markets and the current prices; the various
 labour recruiters combing the villages for likely young men
 and the latest stories brought back by men who had returned
 from working in the south. Every now and then, particularly
 when the talk ranged round decisions in the courts or adding
 to the herds of cattle, references were made to the Ngoni past,
 to their relations with Europeans, both missionaries and
 officials, and to the behaviour of the non-Ngoni groups in the
 Ngoni kingdoms. The older boys listened attentively and as
 we shall see later in Chapter VII acquired among other
 things an extensive knowledge about the needs and uses of
 cattle. The younger ones pricked up their ears now and then
 when a familiar name or event was mentioned, and stored
 up questions to ask their father at a time when he was willing
 to listen and answer.

576 There was the usual Ngoni formality about where people
 417 sat at the kraal gate. The most senior men sat on each side
 of the opening, leaning up against the gate-posts, with the
 rest in decreasing order of rank as they were farther from the
 gate. The cleared space on each side of the gate and in front
 of it was all known as the 'gate of the kraal'. The craftsmen

• [469] who were carving wood or twisting bark rope, making bas-
 kets or plaiting mats, sat according to their age and rank on
 the edges of the senior group or among them. They could
 have carried on their trade anywhere, but they preferred the
 company of their fellows and did not want to miss listening
 to the talk or the arrival of strangers. The herd-boys, when
 858 they were present, were on the extreme edges of those sitting
 [561] there, divided into two groups, 'youths' and boys. Each
 [262] group made its own fire for boiling milk and roasting sweet
 potatoes or groundnuts.

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476 having finished their task, and going off to wash in the river
342 with more whistling and singing.

Specialized crafts

- 463 Ngoni elders said that in old days there were no specialists in the villages, except the iron workers who were mostly captured people, and that all men knew how to work in leather, wood, and fibres. By the time schools had been established [177] and a variety of careers lay open to boys, it was rare to find ex-schoolboys taking up village crafts with a view to making a cash income from them. A few did, however, and their choice of a craft was attributed either to wishing to work with a relative, or to an inborn skill and liking for the craft.
- 281 Tanning skins was one such craft, scraping them, rubbing in ashes and stretching them on frames. Cutting shields from [411] skins and interlacing the front with different coloured skins was considered a highly skilled job. Making wooden spoons, 322 wooden meat dishes, headrests for pillows, hafts for spears and knives, and sheaths for knives, was carried on in most [413] Ngoni villages by two or three specialists using small sharp axes. They were assisted by a youth or two who liked the work, showed some aptitude for it and enjoyed sitting by the kraal gate, intent on their job, but missing nothing of what 285 was going on. In remote villages many men made mats and baskets for household use and for sale and paid their taxes from such sales. Every man knew how to make bark rope 283 for binding loads, fastening the grass on roofs, tying up beasts.
- 534 Musical instruments were another specialized craft, inseparable from being a musician and knowing how to perform on them. Small hand pianos of strips of metal on a wooden base, single stringed and several stringed lyres strung over a hollow gourd—these were solo instruments to accompany songs. A boy might all of a sudden decide to make such an instrument and learn how to play it by assiduous practice.

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action of the hoe. 'They are our kin according to their eyes' was said as a reminder of misplaced trust in those who appeared to be helpful but were not really. 577
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Readiness to take advice both from their age-mates and from older men was another quality held to be desirable in young men. Proverbs illustrating this were: 'He that refuses instruction will be surprised by blood,' and 'He remembers that he fell; he forgot that he was hurt.' As often with proverbs, there were others with a contrary emphasis which were sometimes used as a retort to the former ones, or in self-defence. 'The inheritance was eaten by those worthy of it' was intended as a rejoinder not to interfere in other people's affairs, when unwanted advice was offered. 'The body is felt by its owner' was sometimes said to encourage a man to stick to his own opinion. On the other hand a too abrupt rejoinder, especially to an older person, was regarded as discourteous, and onlookers said 'You cause the spittle to be dry' to express extreme disapproval.

Ngoni personality in a changing culture

The direction of the training of boys had been formerly towards military life, and towards the qualities which made effective fighting men, and emphasized loyalty to leaders and camaraderie in the regiments. This emphasis on military preparedness was however never the sole emphasis in Ngoni training, and hence when warfare came to an end, there remained traditional spheres of influence and activity which were an integral part of life in the Ngoni kingdoms, as well as new spheres of activity opened up by missions, the administration, the trading companies and the labour recruiters. 867
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[703]

The traditional forms of activity were found in Ngoni local government which included the chief's administration and the courts of law; family and village affairs including the building up of herds and buying and selling cattle; and ritual life. The new kinds of activity included occupations such as teacher, minister, clerk, store assistant, houseboy, 463
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463 foreman in charge of gangs of workers. All this last group
 177 involved the earning, spending and sharing of money in-
 [434] comes, but even more important in Ngoni eyes, they offered
 [571] opportunities of exercising authority, and of controlling and
 directing others.

624 In local government and in the courts, which formed an
 693 integral part of it, the qualities demanded were wisdom,
 ability to make decisions, expert knowledge of the law, skill
 in conducting cases and in summing up evidence, and know-
 ledge of the people, so that their reactions to new measures
 and to difficult court decisions could be forecast. Certain
 [827] women were thought of as inheriting this kind of judicial
 ability and were often turned to in private by their husbands,
 [562] sons or brothers and asked to declare themselves in support
 of or against an important decision and to discuss its merits
 or demerits.

622 In choosing a successor to a chief the regents who were
 responsible for the selection looked for particular qualities of
 individual character as well as for evidence of the ideal Ngoni
 personality traits. Men who by right of inheritance could
 have succeeded their father were sometimes passed over be-
 cause they showed characteristics which would make them
 a bad chief. This was one of the reasons why sons of leading
 men were watched so closely and corrected so sharply by the
 elders of a village who were noting their adjustment to the
 basic personality pattern as well as their individual character.

There were certain acknowledged ritual activities which
 demanded of the performer both a high degree of conformity
 to Ngoni personality patterns and special individual character-
 istics. On the death of a chief one of his sons or brothers
 was designated to become head of the 'elder' village which
 remained behind, when the new chief with some of the
 members of his father's 'house' moved out to found a new
 village. The 'one who stayed behind' as he was called was
 expected to be the epitome of all Ngoni qualities, and to have
 a good memory for, and an understanding of, Ngoni tradi-

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tion. In all the selection of individuals to 'enter the place' of 622
 an important person who had died, the new holder of the [554]
 place had to measure up to Ngoni personality standards and
 be acknowledged as a 'good character'.

The new kinds of occupation open to Ngoni men as a 463 ●
 result of education in the mission schools were of two main 177
 types: those where the holders of the job still lived in the [871]
 Ngoni kingdom and carried on their work in the setting of a
 Ngoni village; and those which involved leaving the village
 and living and working outside Ngoniland, more or less out
 of sight and out of control of Ngoni elders.

Some of the mission teachers, ministers, and evangelists 797
 returned to live in Ngoni villages after they had completed 871
 their training, though others of course were posted else- [177]
 where. In one of the villages described in Chapter I there had
 been in the early days of mission work fierce and continuous
 opposition to the opening of schools, as well as to the preach- 159
 ing of Christianity. I mentioned the old evangelist who had 797
 been threatened with death by the chief when he first took [577]
 up his work. If he had left under those threats he would have
 lost out for ever among his people, for he would have been
 called a coward. He stayed, cultivated his land, grew his
 own food, was a great hunter, was respectful to the chief and
 elders, brought up his children to respect Ngoni traditions.
 He gradually gained the reputation of being brave, a 'gentle'
 man, a powerful and fluent speaker in the church on Sun-
 days, a man of wisdom and judgement, and he was con-
 stantly asked for his opinion on village affairs. Most of the [796]
 village, Christian and non-Christian alike, went to the church
 service on Sundays, sang the Ngoni hymns, listened to his
 sermons in the Ngoni language, sprinkled with Ngoni pro-
 verbs and illustrated by episodes from Ngoni life and history. [184]
 Very few people in that village over twenty-five years old [851]
 were Christians, but the leading Ngoni families allowed him
 to baptize younger and older children and to instruct them
 in Sunday-school. The Ngoni elders contributed to the

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159 church funds in cash or in kind, and helped to build the
797 church and school.

159 The younger headmaster of the school had never been
875 threatened with death. He came in on the tide of recognition
and respect accorded to the character and behaviour of the
evangelist. His grandfather, like the evangelist's father, had
been a well-known warrior with his own praise song cele-
brating his exploits. When the chief saw the exemplary

[622] behaviour of the headmaster and his Ngoni wife, listened to
[871] some of the lessons in school, watched the boys 'drill' in the
playground, he ordered all Ngoni boys and girls in the village
to attend school, and arranged a roster for cattle-herding,
so that the boys would learn herding as well as their school
lessons. He sent for the headmaster to report to him periodi-
cally on how the children were behaving, and which ones
were showing particular aptitudes. The young headmaster
showed characteristic Ngoni ability to organize his school,
control his staff, demand and get good behaviour from the
children. He was, like the evangelist, a huntsman of repute,
and he was too a good dancer, and had a judgement in
public affairs that was acknowledged to be beyond his years.

177 The aversion shown in the other Ngoni village described
797 in Chapter I to schools and to missions generally arose
871 partly from the fact that there were no Ngoni teachers or
186 ministers serving that area. The teachers in near-by schools
were from a tribe whom the Ngoni despised and whose per-
sonal habits they deplored. The missions in the area had
made no attempt to integrate schoolteaching and preaching
in the churches with Ngoni life and thought. Some Ngoni
fathers sent their boys to the Scottish Mission boarding-
school in Blantyre, and were willing to pay the fees because
they knew and believed in those in charge of that school.

871 Ngoni fathers, and this was true of both areas, expected
463 their boys who had been to school and had entered European
554 employment away from their homes, to find work which
assured them a superior and not an inferior or unskilled

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position. They wanted them to be, or to become, senior clerks, trusted store assistants, valued houseboys, foremen in charge of other men, hospital assistants. They wanted them, in other words, to be in positions where Ngoni traits would be appreciated, and where good behaviour and self-control, ability to supervise others, responsibility and initiative, obedience to orders, would be recognized and rewarded. 871
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In conclusion here is a record of a conversation I heard in the village of a very senior chief, so senior that he was given the title of *Intasi* when his subjects addressed him. The chief, who was then in his seventies, but active and vigorous, was sitting in a chair on the veranda of his hut, out of the sun's glare, with several of the senior men of the village behind him. Two young teachers in charge of a school came to greet him. They bent one knee as they squatted in front of him, as they had been taught to do as children, gave him the customary greeting, and waited in silence till he spoke. 622
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'How is your school?'

'The classes are full and the children are learning well, *Intasi*.'

'How do they behave?'

'Like Ngoni children, *Intasi*.'

'What do they learn?'

'They learn reading, writing and arithmetic, scripture and geography and drill.'

'Is that education?'

'It is education, *Intasi*.'

'No! No! Education is *wry* broad, *wry* deep. It is not only in books, it is learning to live. I am an old man. When I was a boy I went with the army to the Bemba war. Then the mission came and I went to school. I became a teacher. Then I was a chief. I have seen this country change, and now the young men go away to work. I tell you Ngoni children must learn how to live, and how to work and earn money, and how to build up our land. *Uyazane na?*' (Do you hear?)

'*Tete Intasi*.' (Yes, O chief.)

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241 those who have not been working. Some people choose to do their
273 work in the garden on the day previous to the party, on the theory
476 that working and drinking do not go together. A few people offer
[465] baskets of ground-nuts or other crops or meat in return for a day's
labour, and monetary payments are also known.

Craftsmen

① 463 There are a number of specialized occupations which give rise to
inter-village trading. Pots are made by women. Some villages have no
523 potter and their inhabitants are dependent on pot-makers in neigh-
[462] bouring villages. Sometimes a woman may acquire a reputation for
pot-making sufficiently high to attract custom even from villages
where there are already pot-makers. Pots are sold in return for their
own volume of maize, or for money, or the customers may be required
to provide sufficient clay for twice the amount of pottery that they
wish to obtain.

285 Basketry is a man's craft, and at the end of the rainy season, when
[462] it is necessary to watch all day in the gardens for monkeys, men with
this skill spend their time at it. Baskets are sold for money or for maize,
and, as with pottery, there is a certain amount of inter-village sale.

759 Herbalists draw their clients from a wider area than do the pot- and
basket-makers, and their contacts with their patients are more intense.
If a man falls sick, the remedies known in the family are tried first, but
if these are unsuccessful he may go to someone who is known for his
wide knowledge of medicines. Patients will travel up to 15 miles or
so to consult a herbalist, who may require them to live in his village
to receive treatment. Payment for medical treatment is sometimes
demanded part in advance, but other practitioners ask for a fee only
when a cure has been effected. Since the establishment of medical
[648] services by the Administration the way has been open for the medical
orderlies to operate in opposition to the herbalists, using misappropriated European drugs.

III. THE FAMILY

Principles of Descent

611 The Ngoni are traditionally a patrilineal patrilocal people paying
[591] bride-wealth with cattle. This tradition is reflected in modern prac-
[583] tice only to a limited extent. Many of the men and women who were
[184] incorporated after Zwangendaba had crossed the Zambezi came from

IV. WIDER CONTACTS

Other Local Groups

We have so far in this account been concerned with delineating the main outlines of political and village structure and the kinship system. We have examined the internal constitution of the tribe and have only been concerned secondarily with the external relationships by which the Ngoni are connected with the wider world. But in the Fort Jameson District there are, and have been for many years, people who do not fall within the tribal framework but with whom the Ngoni interact. These include people from the British Isles and South Africa, Indians, and Coloured persons, as well as Africans from other tribes. The Europeans are there as administrators, missionaries, farmers, and traders. Indians are traders and farmers, while Coloured persons are farmers and foremen. Africans from other tribes are, like the Ngoni, labourers on the farms and in the township, as well as subsistence cultivators in their own tribal areas. 563

The land of the District is divided into Native Reserve and Trust land, farm-land, township, and Crown land. Almost all Ngoni villages lie on Reserve or Trust land, and it is in this zone that most of the activities described so far take place. On the farm-land Ngoni participate not as headmen or lieutenants or chiefs, but as labourers and foremen. They still fill the roles of husband, wife, sibling, parent, and child, and sometimes other kinship positions, but the family in the farm compound is on a smaller scale than in the village. In the town of Fort Jameson the range of activity open to them is greater, and there are Ngoni butchers, drivers, clerks, shop assistants, Native Urban Court assessors, and so on. All these roles on farm and in the town are shared with Africans from other tribes in the Eastern Province and from more distant regions. 311 463 ●

The Churches

The influence of the non-African groups extends out beyond the areas in which they live into the reserves. We have already seen how the Administration has affected the life of the tribe. The Christian Church has also had a profound influence. By 1910 there were three denominations at work in Ngoni country: the Dutch Reformed Church Mission,¹ the White Fathers,² and the Universities' Mission to 797 795

¹ Algemeene Zending Commissie der Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in den Oranje Vrijstaat.

² Société des Missionnaires de Notre Dame d'Afrique, a Catholic Order.

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285 the porridge inside warm. For straining beer, a special wide mesh basket is used, either conical or hemispherical in shape. Round and rectangular baskets of various sizes, with flat lids, are also found [482] and are used for carrying small quantities of food on a journey.

415 In former times, wooden plates were used, but these are now
412 very rare. Wooden spoons are still made and used, and large flat
[531] porridge stirrers, with geometrical ornamentation, are common. Wooden hemispherical pats, with a handle, are used for smoothing cooked porridge.

412 At the back of the hut, or on the verandah outside, are the pestle and mortar used for reducing maize and other cereals to flour. Mortars range in height from one to four feet, the smaller mortars being used by children or for crushing ground-nuts. They are usually of about one foot in diameter, and are made from single blocks of wood, usually from Afzilia quanzensis or Monotes trees. The inside of the block is hollowed out to leave a receptacle for the maize that is nearly as deep as the mortar is high. The only decoration is [531] a ridge of wood about an inch wide left encircling the base three or four inches from the ground. Pestles are undecorated cylinders of wood, made from Terminalia sericea or Kigelia pinnata trees. They may be as much as six feet long, and range in thickness from four inches down to the half-inch pestles used by young children playing [534] at pounding.

The hard residue of maize that cannot be reduced to flour by pounding is ground between two stones, and these grinding stones are also kept in the hut. Not every woman has her own grindstones [426] or her own pestle and mortar, and these objects are loaned and borrowed within the village.

352 Most huts contain some form of chair or stool, but these are sometimes very small indeed, standing only two inches off the ground. Petrol boxes are used to sit on, and deck chairs, known in the vernacular as "sleeping chairs," are common. Carpenters make [463] a small folding chair that is fairly common. European upright chairs, basket chairs and Morris chairs are sometimes seen, but these are not made locally.

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463 Other specialised activities carried out in the village, apart from those mentioned, are such things as shoe mending, bicycle repairing, and carpentry. These trades are followed by men who learnt them in Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere, and are carried on as part-time occupations. Village stores are modest affairs, with goods for sale that have been bought retail from Indian traders in Fort Jameson, and have been brought out to the village on bicycle. 443 Larger stores on the main roads may be able to buy wholesale, and may employ a tailor making up cloth bought in the store. Shops called in the vernacular "hotels," where tea and scones are sold and perhaps bread, also lie on the main roads.